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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6801  
INFO RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 8534  
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RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 3213  
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI 9669  
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE 5418  
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR 4157  
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC  
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
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SUBJECT: DRL ASSISTANT SECRETARY KRAMER'S CALL ON THE  
MINISTER OF LABOR

¶1. (SBU) Summary. DRL Assistant Secretary Kramer met with Khursheed Shah, the new Minister of Labor, Manpower, and Overseas Pakistanis on April 22. During the meeting, they discussed the government's initiatives to combat child labor and the trafficking of persons for bonded labor purposes. The Minister also pledged support for the U.S.-sponsored Reconstruction Opportunity Zones. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) In an April 22 meeting with Khursheed Shah, the new Minister of Labor, Manpower, and Overseas Pakistanis, David Kramer, Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor and PolCouns noted the GOP's progress on labor reform but pressed the new government to do more to combat child labor and trafficking in persons. Recognizing that child and bonded labor remain serious problems in Pakistan, Minister Shah observed that poverty remains the root cause of Pakistan's labor troubles. Alternative programs, such as apprenticeship opportunities, would have to be created to serve as income substitutes for poor families that send children to work.

¶3. (SBU) Labor Secretary Malik Asif Hayat, also in attendance, remarked that while child labor had all but been eliminated in the formal sector, child and bonded labor remain in the hard-to-regulate informal sector. Hayat praised the Department of Labor's child labor programs in Pakistan over the last ten years and requested further USG support for Pakistan's efforts to improve labor conditions nation-wide. Secretary Hayat also reported that surprise labor inspections, heavily constrained in Punjab, Sindh and the Northwest Frontier Province since 2003, would be resumed under a new labor inspections policy. (Comment. A new policy to oversee and coordinate provincial labor inspections is currently being reviewed by the Ministry of Labor. End Comment.)

¶4. (SBU) Turning to trafficking in persons (TIP), A/S Kramer informed Shah that the USG would like to work with Pakistan on the issue and did not want to see Pakistan drop in TIP rankings from Tier 2 to Tier 3. Shah recognized that TIP remains a concern for Pakistan and pledged that the new government is taking the issue seriously. Hayat remarked that TIP remains mostly in the purview of the Ministry of Interior. However, the Ministry of Labor is taking steps, particularly among brick kilns in Sindh, to combat bonded labor and provide housing and schools for freed laborers.

15. (SBU) Minister Shah and Secretary Hayat both pledged support for U.S.-sponsored Reconstruction Opportunity Zones (ROZs) and were optimistic that any concerns over labor conditions could be overcome. Shah opined that democratic institutions are key to adequately addressing human rights and labor issues in Pakistan. He requested U.S. support for the Ministry's programs, particularly those that tackle child labor. A/S Kramer concluded the meeting by reiterating support for GOP actions to combat child and bonded labor and pledged to work with relevant ministries to solve issues of mutual concern.

16. (U) This cable has been cleared by A/S Kramer.

PATTERSON